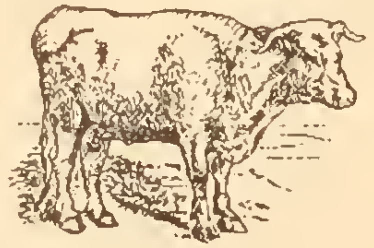
C. *A full supply of water would be provided for present water contract holders more often.*

Presently, the reservoir yields only 32,000 acre-feet per year because of safety considerations. Reservoir contracts for water total 40,000 acre-feet, meaning that water users can't expect a full supply from the reservoir in its present state. Raising the spillway during repair of the dam could increase the yield to 63,000 acre-feet.



D. *Fish and wildlife habitat could be improved.*

Analyses being done for the study will also identify areas for possible wetland enhancement, wildlife mitigation areas to replace habitat lost to raising the reservoir's water surface, and effects on threatened and endangered wildlife species.

E. *Recreation could be enhanced in the area.*

The study will analyze impacts to recreation and identify recreation enhancement and mitigation areas.

Who's conducting the study?

The Tongue River Dam Rehabilitation Study is a coordinated effort of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, and the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation. The study also involves the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, the Montana Riparian Association, and other agencies.

How can I help?

Public concerns and opinions are important to development of a worthwhile plan.

"Open house" meetings for the public will be held in the Tongue River area to provide information on the study's current progress and gather information on recreation and fish and wildlife concerns. These informal meetings will address repairing the spillway, satisfying reserved water rights, and enhancing the habitat and recreation around the reservoir. Public input will help identify the area's needs and be used in the special report.

You would also have the opportunity to provide input on the project if an EIS is prepared. Part of the EIS process is to have public scoping meetings and a formal comment period.

Please read this brochure and attend one of the meetings listed below. Agencies involved in the study will be there to answer your questions.

MEETING SCHEDULE

Miles City,
Monday, Oct. 21, 1:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.
Miles Community College, Room 106

Ashland,
Tuesday, Oct. 22, 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Saint Labre Indian School, Old Gym

Sheridan, WY,
Wednesday, Oct. 23, 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Sheridan County Library, Inner Circle

If you are unable to attend the meetings, write with your comments or phone:

Department of Natural
Resources and Conservation
attn: Glen McDonald
1520 East Sixth Avenue
Helena, MT 59620-2301
(406) 444-6646

I think the Tongue River Dam Study should consider. . .

(signed)

(address—if you want on the mailing list)

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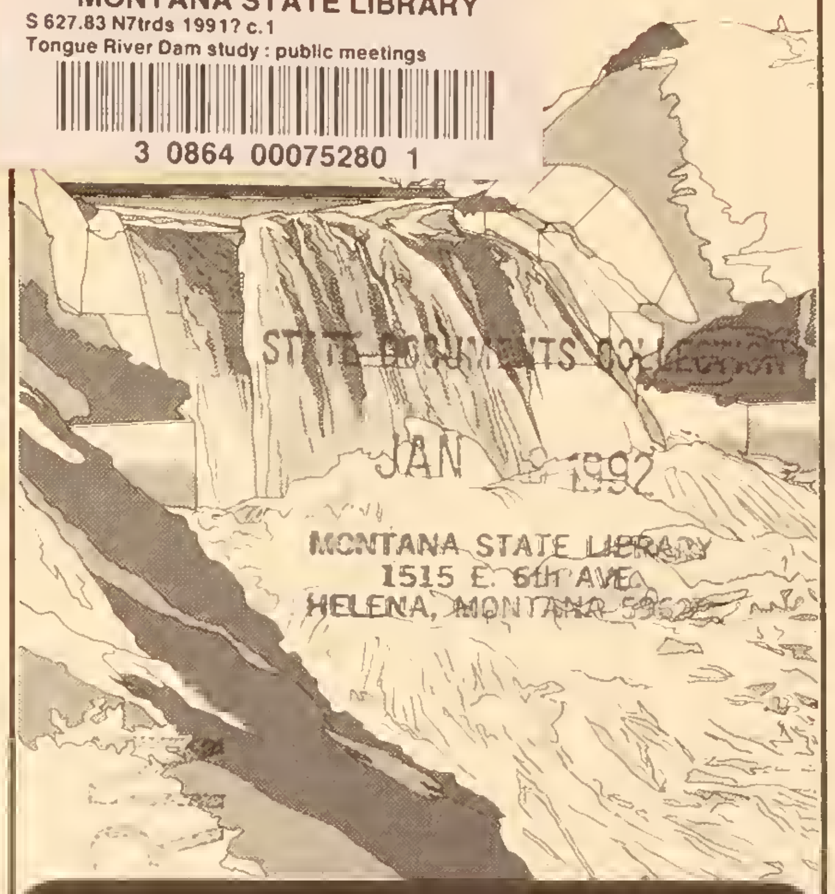

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TONGUE RIVER DAM STUDY

PUBLIC MEETINGS

The Tongue River Dam impounds a reservoir on the Tongue River approximately 10 miles north of the Wyoming border in southeastern Montana. The valley downstream of the dam is devoted mainly to agriculture. The Tongue River Project irrigates 15,000 acres in this drought-prone area. Tongue River Reservoir boasts an excellent warm water fishery. Four state record fish have been caught there. The reservoir is also popular for boating and picnicking.

Why does Tongue River Dam need rehabilitation?

Increased firm annual yield is needed from the reservoir to satisfy the compact recently negotiated with the Northern Cheyenne Tribe regarding the Tribe's reserved water rights. Additionally, the present dam is an unsafe, high-hazard structure.

Why is Tongue River Dam classified as being "unsafe" and "high-hazard"?

The Tongue River Dam, which was completed by the Works Progress Administration in 1940, was designed to accommodate a flood flow of 98,000 cubic feet per second (cfs). However, the reinforced concrete spillway in the left abutment could fail under flows of 13,000 to 16,000 cfs. In fact, it nearly failed during the 1978 flood when passing only 7,800 cfs (illustrated in the cover drawing). The inadequate spillway makes the dam unsafe.

People along the river in the Northern Cheyenne Reservation and the towns of Birney, Ashland, and Miles City would be at risk should the dam fail, which has caused the Tongue River Dam to be classified as high hazard under the National Dam Safety Program. Dam failure would also result in the loss of property, as well as the valuable irrigation, fishery, and recreation resource offered by the Tongue River Reservoir.

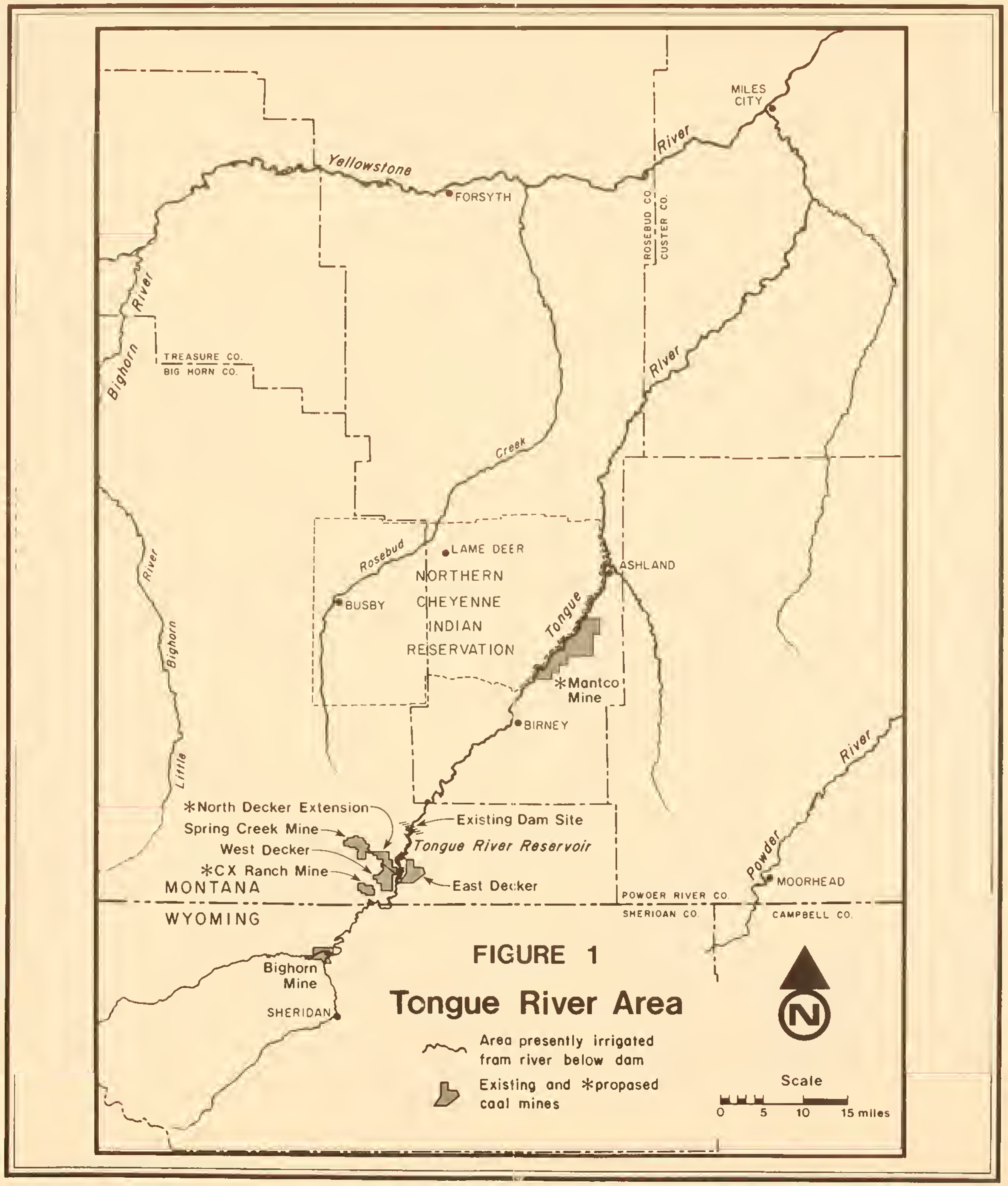

FIGURE 1

Tongue River Area

What's being done to solve the problem?

Supplying water to the Tribe and preventing a dam failure are the purposes of the Tongue River Dam Rehabilitation Study. This study will result in a *special report* in early 1992 analyzing a way to repair and improve the dam. The plan will include provisions to improve fish and wildlife habitat and recreation in the area. The effects on threatened and endangered wildlife species and on cultural resources will also be examined.

What specific repairs are being proposed for the dam?

The primary option being examined by the study team at this time is repairing the spillway, raising the spillway crest 4 feet, and replacing the outlet. While the present study will provide information on one way to meet the water needs of the irrigators, the Tribe, fishermen, and boaters, other options for supplying the water and resolving associated issues may also exist. These would be addressed during an environmental impact statement (EIS) which could follow the special report if authorized by Congress.

What benefits does this option offer?

A. *The reservoir's increased annual yield would satisfy the reserved water rights claims of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe.*

The Tribe and Montana's Reserved Water Rights Compact Commission signed an agreement on June 11, 1991, allowing the Northern Cheyenne Tribe to take up to 20,000 acre-feet of water per year from the reservoir (in addition to their existing right of 7,500 acre-feet). This compact is now awaiting ratification by Congress.

B. *This approach would eliminate the safety hazard now posed by the Tongue River Dam.*